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WAR WITH RUSSIA.

SPEECH

OF THE

RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE,

(M.P. FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,)

ON THE

NEGOTIATIONS AND THE WAR.

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

On Thursday, May 24, 1855.

CORRECTED BY HIMSELF.

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SPEECH, ETC.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, May 24, 1855.

PROSECUTION OF THE WAR.

MR. GLADSTONE: Sir, although I believe I can adopt, without exception, all the sentiments and the arguments of my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. R. Phillimore) who has just addressed the House, yet, considering the very limited time which remains at our command before the Whitsuntide recess for the discussion of this question, a question as it is of the widest extent and of the deepest moment, it may be for the convenience of the House that I should at once follow my learned Friend in the debate, rather than wait until a later hour.

Now, Sir, whatever else may be thought of the state, and of the difficulties, of the subject before us, it will at least be admitted on all hands that we have a liberal bill of fare. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) has tendered to us a Motion which amounts firstly to a distinct and intelligible vote of want of confidence in the Government, and secondly to a somewhat indistinct and feeble declaration of our willingness to support Her Majesty in the prosecution of the war. Upon this Motion the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Portsmouth (Sir F. Baring) has moved an Amendment, which adverts to the negotiations at Vienna, but adverts to them in language which I for one do not profess to understand. My hon. Friend and colleague in the representation of the

University of Oxford (Sir W. Heathcote) has proposed to amend this Amendment by the insertion of words which would give it a tendency decidedly pacific, without weakening the pledge to support the Crown in the actual prosecution of the war, and has supported his proposal by what appeared to me an admirably reasoned speech. Lastly, we have my hon. Friend the Member for Kidderminster (Mr. Lowe) who, feeling apparently much as I do with respect to the language of the Member for Portsmouth, completes the party by proposing to alter his Amendment in such a manner as to give it a decidedly warlike instead of a decidedly pacific aspect.

For my own part, Sir, I feel no difficulty in making my own choice among the numerous alternatives thus placed before us. The right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire calls on us to censure the Government because of its ambiguous language and uncertain conduct. I cannot obey his call, because it seems to me that, up to this time, and so far as we are yet informed, the ambiguity of language and the uncertainty of conduct which may be imputed to the Ministry are appearances mainly due to the peculiar state and conditions of the negotiation in which they are engaged; and that it would have been a violation of public duty on their part, if, in order to obviate a censure such as that proposed, they had hazarded any of the great interests committed to their charge, by seeking to supply us with full and clear explanations before the time had arrived at which, in their judgment, such explanations might be given with perfect safety. I am bound to add that, although I could conscientiously, as far as the mere words are concerned, join the right hon. Gentleman in lamenting some ambiguity of language and uncertainty of conduct on the part of the Government, no Member of which I may observe has yet spoken in this debate, and though I should wish to

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see a more decisive direction given to both their language and their conduct, yet it would not be the kind of impulse which the right hon. Gentleman desires to impart to them; because with reference to the negotiations at Vienna, he is satisfied that the proper time has come for this House to declare its opinion that the season for their prosecution has passed away, while I, on the other hand, feel that, according to the latest information before us, these negotiations have afforded, and if rightly handled, may yet afford us, probably, at least, if not certainly, an admirable opportunity for putting an end to the dangers, horrors, and miseries of war. At the same time, I must not quit the subject of the right hon. Gentleman's Motion without expressing, in the strongest terms, the gratification with which I have listened to several most important declarations that have fallen from his lips; declarations which, representing as he does no inconsiderable section of opinion in this House, may come to exercise hereafter a weighty and a highly beneficial influence on the course of our proceedings with respect to this great subject.

As respects the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Portsmouth, I confess it appears to me to be fairly open to the charge which the Member for Buckinghamshire brings against the Government, that of ambiguity. It expresses regret that the negotiations have not led to a termination of hostilities, but it leaves wholly untouched the real questions—namely, through whose fault it is that the case so stands, and whether we ought still to desire and recommend that they may be prosecuted with a view to bringing about that result. Considering, what no one will for a moment question, the frankness and straightforwardness of the character of the right hon. Gentleman, I could not for a moment suppose that he had framed his Amendment in the most

loose and uncertain language in order to combine in a deceitful show of unity persons holding the most irreconcilable opinions; but if the Amendment had been framed with that object, it could not have been better calculated to attain it; and if it should be adopted by the House, such and such only will be its effect. In the speech indeed of the right hon. Gentleman —and I must here say that with his speech I have very little fault to find—he expressed his wish that the House should give utterance to its regret that the negotiations had not yet led to a termination of hostilities. Sir, I confess that the little monosyllable "yet" has for me a most harmonious and soothing effect, and, if the right hon. Gentleman will only transplant those three letters from his speech into his Motion, there will not be much cause of difference between us. But if he will not do so, I must object to his Amendment because its sense is equivocal; because it speaks of the negotiations and communications respecting peace as matters that have passed away, and because difficult or even impossible as I own I find it to attach a definite signification to the mere terms which he employs, yet I should look upon the act of its adoption by the House as a proceeding subject indeed to much doubt upon its construction, yet practically tending rather to permit an improper prolongation of the war than to promote the return of peace.

Next, I have to consider the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Kidderminster (Mr. Lowe), and with respect to his proposal I must say, that it is at any rate clear and explicit, and that a clear and explicit declaration of its views is the only declaration that this House ought to make; assuming of course that the time has come when it is necessary that the sentiments of the House should be declared. It is well to postpone until the latest moment anything that savours

of interference with the functions of the Executive Government. But whether it be in support of, or in opposition to, the course of the Government, you will only detract from your dignity, and diminish also your influence, if, from whatever cause, you consent in the vote to which you may come to use doubtful or hesitating language. I am glad, therefore, that my hon. Friend makes a proposal which is so perfectly clear and explicit; but on many other grounds I must object to his Motion. I object to it, firstly, because it purports to recite as a fact what I take to be no fact at all; for it asserts without qualification that Russia has refused to admit of any limitation of her naval force in the Black Sea. Now, even if I go too far in considering this to be untrue, it is at any rate highly disputable, and nothing that is disputable ought to be recited in a vote of this House as if it were indisputable. And I find that, on the 17th of April, Prince Gortchakoff stated to the conference, that "Russia would not consent to the strength of her navy being restricted to any fixed number either by treaty or in any other manner." I admit that that passage, if it stood alone, would fairly bear the construction which my hon. Friend has put upon it. But it does not stand alone. On the contrary, the same record informs us that, at the same conference, Prince Gortchakoff went on to say—

> "At the same time, he did not pretend to exclude peremptorily the consideration of every proposal tending to the point of limitation:"

which, standing thus in the English version, seems to be but a feeble rendering of the original French, which says—"*se rattachant au principe de la limitation.*" But, the Russian Plenipotentiary added—"He reserved to himself the right of refusing his adhesion."—[*Protocols of the Conferences at Vienna*, p. 54.]

It may be said that under cover of this very obvious and proper reservation, he

intended to refuse any proposal that might be made involving limitation: but this, which we may suspect or may suppose, we are not entitled to assert; much less, then, are we entitled to say that Russia actually has refused to consent to limitation upon any terms. I therefore object to this Amendment as not consistent with the facts, and I must add, without entering upon other matters of exception, that I also object to it because, while removing the ambiguity of the Amendment which it amends, it substitutes a warlike, under circumstances which in my judgment call for a peaceful declaration.

It remains, therefore, for me to say that I shall support the Amendment of my hon. Friend (Sir W. Heathcote), as it expresses, and likewise expresses in the mildest and most prudent form, the just desire of this House to make the present negotiations, or communications, whichever they may be called, the means of leading to a settlement of this unhappy question.

And, Sir, I apprehend it is impossible to conceive a graver issue than that which is now raised. It is a grave issue for all Gentlemen, without exception, who sit in this House. It is most of all grave, after the present Ministers of the Crown, for those who have recently stood in the position of responsible advisers of Her Majesty, and who were among the official authors of the present war. For them to give any opinion whatever in this House varying in any degree from that of the Executive Government on this question—to exhibit in the face of the world and of the country anything like divisions in the councils of this country—is a proceeding which, I am well aware, can only be justified by the strongest conviction, and by obligation of the highest order. But that which justifies in such a case also requires and constrains; and I do not for a moment hesitate, while I own my responsibility, to

admit that I must either be engaging in the performance of a great duty or in the perpetration of a great crime, or, at the very least, in the commission of a great error.

Now, Sir, the proposition I am prepared to maintain is this—and strange enough I might expect that it would sound in the ears of hon. Gentlemen, if I were to take my impressions of the settled opinions of this House from the current language of society, or from the tone of the public press generally, which, on the whole, is probably at the present moment not an unfaithful mirror of the state of public opinion in regard to the war—the proposition I hold is this, that your war was just, that you have gained the objects of your war, and that if war was just while those objects were unattained, it becomes unjust if you continue to prosecute it after their attainment. I hold that you are now in danger of forfeiting and losing altogether the righteous and elevated character in which you have waged this war. I shall contend that England and France did not enter into it as particular Powers having only separate and particular interests to defend, and meeting on a footing of moral and, so to speak, juridical equality the Power against which they were to fight. While, perhaps, you think only of meeting the general opinion of the public, you are in danger of being forced altogether to descend from that lofty elevation at which you commenced this contest, and of having to take up a position both practically and morally isolated. Above all, my object in this discussion is to get at that which is the real knot of our debate; I want to show what it is that, lying under the surface, is really in our minds and in our hearts—why it is, that having what, *primâ facie*, amounts to an offer of peace, we are not going to accept it. Is it a question of terms, or is it not a question of terms? Is it a question of something

broader, deeper, higher, and larger than any of the terms before us? If it is, indeed, no question of this or that stipulation, but of the adoption of a policy or the realisation of an idea, I want to know what that policy and what that idea are?

To me it seems that there are two courses that may be followed, either of which has precedents in history, and may under given suppositions be made good at least in abstract reasoning. One of them is, after having taken stipulations such as the circumstances may seem to require, to bind the Power with which you have been at war to their observance by treaty. The other is to destroy, if you can, the strength of that Power, to dismember its territory, and to grind it to pieces. Either of these plans is consistent and intelligible; but there is one plan, and I am afraid it is the plan that my hon. Friend the Member for Dorsetshire recommends—there is a plan that is neither consistent nor intelligible. That plan may be stated in words such as these—Do not dismember Russia; do not involve yourselves in territorial enterprise; do not attempt to tear that great empire to pieces, because it is an object beyond your power to attain. On the other hand, refuse to trust Russia—refuse to rely on treaty stipulations—but do what? Insult her. Offer her indignities; strike her in the face, and, having done so, then leave her with all her strength unimpaired to meditate and to watch for an opportunity of revenge. That is the policy of those who say, "We refuse to argue upon a mere question of particular terms given and refused, for the difference between them is scarcely perceptible; but what we are determined to have is a military success." This, Sir, is a rude outline of the views with which I shall support the Amendment of my hon. Friend.

And now, Sir, in the first place, let us look at the precise state of the facts before us. Four Points have been proposed as

the bases of negotiation. The first of these relates to the Protectorate over the Principalities, and upon that subject I will not waste words after the statement of my hon. and learned Friend behind me (Mr. Phillimore)—but I certainly should have thought it was plain on the very face of the case, that if there could be a mode of procedure happily adapted to meet the exigencies of this great question, it was to substitute for the exclusive rights of Russia, acquired to her by virtue of her aggressions, rights which she would really have to exercise only as duties, not alone, not of her own arbitrary will, but in conjunction with the other great Powers of Europe; and which, as far as the Danubian Principalities are concerned, would place something as like as circumstances will permit to a free and independent Power between the arms of Russia and the territories under the actual Government of Turkey.

We come next to the free navigation of the Danube, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire has said to-night—I think in strange forgetfulness of what has passed on former occasions—that the first and second points were matters totally insignificant—matters about which Russia did not care, and concessions—I forget whether this sentiment was uttered by the right hon. Member or by another hon. Gentleman—concessions of no moment made by Russia, in order to secure the neutrality of Austria and Germany. Well, but, many months ago, was not Russia desirous of securing the neutrality of Austria and Germany? Was she not then, has she not all along been anxious to bid high for that neutrality; and yet, until a very recent date, did she not refuse you the slightest concession on either of these points? And what is the view of the right hon. Gentleman? Surely, he is the last man who has a right to attach a character of insignificance to the concessions of Russia in opening the mouth of the

Danube; because I remember, in an able speech made by the right hon. Gentleman before the war actually began, and at a time when for the most part we contented ourselves with the discussion of much more limited views, that the right hon. Gentleman pointed to the liberation of the mouth of the Danbe as one among the great but remote and little foreseen results that might follow upon bringing the war to a satisfactory conclusion.

Mr. DISRAELI; I did not treat the concession as insignificant, but I only said that I did not think there was any difficulty in it.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I accept, not only with willingness but with pleasure, the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman, and I understand from him now that it is not disputed that this point was a point of capital importance. It stands, then, that upon the first two of the Four Points you had in view as the necessary bases of negotiation, your demands were actually conceded.

And what, Sir, shall we say next, with regard to the fourth point? Has that been agreed to or not? In point of fact, we cannot say that it has been conceded, or that it has not; for this plain reason—that it has not been discussed. It was proposed by Russia, and urged by Austria, that this fourth point should be discussed pending the settlement of the third, but the Western Powers objected to enter into the discussion. What was the reason of this refusal? Did they object to enter into the discussion because they thought it would be so thorny and difficult that it would tend to frustrate the entire purpose of the conferences; or did they object because they had good reason to believe that the point would be conceded, and because they apprehended that they would find Russia—to whom, if such were her intentions, I give no other credit than that of great sagacity and a well-considered

calculation of her own interests—ready to keep up with, and, perhaps, to outstrip, them in what they might desire with respect to the fourth point? I assume, then, without fear of raising a disputable question, that, with regard to the fourth point, which involves the rights of the Greek Christians, the original cause of the war, we, the Members of the House of Commons, are not under the impression that it is to be considered as being at this moment the cause of difficulties or of the prolongation of the war.

I now come to the third point, and that divides itself into two questions for consideration—namely, the territorial guarantee to be given to Turkey, and the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea. I set aside the question of the territorial guarantee to be given to Turkey, because the negotiators have arrived at an agreement on the subject with regard to the terms on which this question might be adjusted. Therefore, in point of fact, the only question that remains unsettled is the question of the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea. It has been admitted on all sides that this preponderance is to cease. The principle, then, is not in dispute, but the form in which it is to be applied. The allied Powers proposed a particular method of putting an end to that preponderance, and Russia proposed another method. Her proposal being judged unsatisfactory by England, France, and Austria, she proposed a second method of putting an end to that preponderance; and the question of the difference between these various methods of putting an end to the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea is the question, and in truth the only question, which is now properly before the House, if we are to vote on the transactions as we find them.

My hon. Friend, indeed, the Member for Dorsetshire does not confine himself to

the point at issue, or to opposing the Motion of my hon. Friend and colleague; his objections do not in truth apply to it, more than they do to the entire policy, so far as we know it, of Her Majesty's Government. Now, Her Majesty's Government have not told us that military success is necessary, and that the question is not a question of terms. They have not told us that the fall of Sebastopol is necessary for peace; naturally enough, because the destruction of Sebastopol has never been so much as mentioned in the negotiations. And let me remind the House that, whatever hon. Gentlemen may individually think, their private opinions cannot affect our position as a Power actually engaged in negotiations, nor can we in reference to these negotiations annul the effect of the declarations which have been made and of the principles which have been laid down in the course of them. At Vienna, we have been dealing with this question as a question of terms; I am therefore entitled to assume that it is such, and as such I shall therefore now proceed to consider it.

I regret deeply what seems to me to have been the premature departure of my noble Friend the Member for London from the conferences. It was, as it appears to me, owing to a conflict of duties, which belonged severally to the two distinct spheres which he occupied, and which were manifestly incompatible with each other. At the same time I cherish the hope that that circumstance, together with the departure of M. Drouyn de Lhuys, as it had the effect of practically disabling the conference from action before the last proposition of Russia was laid before it, will leave Her Majesty's Government more free to deal with the question in a spirit at once wise and comprehensive than if they had already given a binding answer to the proposal on the spur of the moment.

While I shall argue that this proposal ought to have been entertained as a point

of departure, I am not about to disavow or to shrink from the responsibilities connected with the origin of the war. In my opinion it is difficult to overstate the weight of those responsibilities. The amount of physical and moral evil brought about by a war of this character, and the amount of moral and physical good intercepted and prevented by it, are on the one side and on the other so gigantic that it is impossible to exaggerate that responsibility. Nevertheless, I confess it appeared to me at the time, and it still appears to me, that we had in this instance, a cause of war, not only in itself just, but also sufficient to warrant our embarking in it. I will endeavour to explain shortly what this cause of war in my view was. How does the position of Russia in reference to Turkey differ from many of those critical and dangerous cases of neighbourhood among States, where it happens that a very strong Power is placed in immediate contiguity with a weak one? Russia had contrived to make her advances alternately by treaty and by violence, so that every step she took was founded on and related to some previous step; and when each new act of violence was committed it was difficult to exhibit it to the world in that light, as it had acquired the character of an approximation to a right; or, at least, of something that was easily to be confounded with a right. In this way Russia established throughout a long course of time relations between herself and the Ottoman empire, which more and more threatened the independence and integrity of that Power. And, perhaps, as I have just used a phrase which is at the present day constantly employed, but little examined or understood, I ought here simply to state that without any reference to the internal state or institutions of Turkey, I conceive we are endeavouring to maintain its integrity and independence simply as against

foreign, and of course in particular as against Russian aggression.

Now, Sir, the noble Lord the Secretary of State for the Colonies has been greatly blamed for a passage in a despatch which he wrote as Foreign Minister in 1853, and in which he admitted that the treaty of Kainardji gave to the Emperor of Russia a right or claim to interference in the internal affairs of the Turkish Empire—an interference having reference to the religious concerns of a number approaching 12,000,000 of Turkish subjects. It appears to me that he has been very unjustly blamed on that score. It is not to be denied, in my opinion—if plain words can convey a plain meaning—that, however justly you may say that the treaty of Kainardji is dangerous, there can be no doubt that it really imports what my noble Friend admitted. When two Powers enter into an engagement together, and one of them promises by treaty to protect the Christian religion and the Christian churches within its boundaries, it is liable to the other Power for the fulfilment of the engagement. I do not mean to say that it is liable in all modes and in all circumstances; but the general principle of liability cannot be got rid of—and I understand that it was the general principle alone that my noble Friend ever intended to admit. It is quite clear that the treaty of Kainardji was a most dangerous treaty in this particular, for the Emperor of Russia was placed by it in a condition, with some colour, and perhaps, more than colour, of right, to build on it a claim to intervention in the internal concerns of the Turkish empire. In 1853 a material extension was attempted to be given, by what was called in the protocols an erroneous interpretation, to that treaty; and it was sought to confirm, by definitions and developments, which really amounted to the acquisition of new privileges, the

perilous hold which the Emperor of Russia had obtained over Turkey. Was it material in the interest of European peace to prevent these aggressions? and was it possible to prevent them, if we allowed one extension after another of these menacing rights, or claims put forward as rights, to be accomplished by the Emperor of Russia? In consequence of the previous results of her diplomacy, Russia was enabled to ask for more than a neighbour ought to obtain by diplomacy from a separate Power; and she was likewise in a condition to resort to the use of material force, and to enter upon a particular portion of the Turkish territory without being liable to a charge of violence and wrong, in the same sense and degree as if she had not been shielded and masked by the peculiar nature of her treaty relations with Turkey. Of this fact there can be no doubt. The numerous instances of the occupation of the Principalities by Russia at different times, and for different causes, with or without the partial assent of Turkey, do not prove the right of Russia in that respect, but they do prove the anomalous character of the Emperor of Russia's treaty rights over the Principalities and the cover which he thus obtained for acts of wrongful force, while his diplomatic interference was covered by the treaty of Kainardji. I recur then to my inquiry: were these aggressions of Russia compatible with the security of Europe? That was the point raised in the time of the late Government by the great Eastern question.

Next let me consider what were the objects originally contemplated by way of defence and security for Turkey against Russia, for we thought it too much to attempt the total eradication of the evil by diplomatic means, and for a long time the efforts of the Four Great Powers were confined merely to narrowing its limits, and effectually hemming it in. It is very

well to say at this time of day that we ought to have sent a fleet into the Black Sea at the time when the Emperor of Russia occupied the Principalities. This is one of the delusions which arise from a total forgetfulness, under circumstances of present excitement, of the former state of things. I do not hesitate to say, that in June, 1853, no Government, and not merely the one to which I belonged, would have ventured to take a step so rash and reckless with respect to the state of opinions, even in our own country. But was the state of opinion in England all that we had to take into view? If we had at that time thought of such a scheme, we must at once have given up all idea of the co-operation of Austria, of Prussia, or of France. It was wholly out of the question then to proceed by the method which some are now so prompt to set up as having been the only proper one. Well, then, Sir, in concert with all the great Powers we negotiated. And what were the points then chiefly in discussion? They were these:—The Emperor of Russia asked for a certain amount, not only of ratification, but of extension for the general right granted by the treaty of Kainardji. The Porte, on the other hand, was ready, up to a certain point, both to recognise and to define that right; and the questions at that time chiefly in debate were, whether the temporal as well as the spiritual privileges of the Greek Christians were to be guaranteed; whether the Greek Christians were to enjoy all the privileges granted to other Christians being Ottoman subjects, or all the privileges granted to any Christians, even although foreigners within the Ottoman Empire; and, lastly, whether this should be guaranteed by a separate engagement with Russia, or by a general engagement with the Five Powers. I am not very far from the mark, if I even say that in 1853, these questions were the only questions in dispute between the allied

Powers and the Russian Government, and I most certainly shall not be contradicted if I add that every one of these objects has now long ago and completely vanished from view. There is now no question of a separate treaty, no question of the temporal privileges of Christian subjects of the Porte, and no question of claiming anything for the Greeks except what may be enjoyed by other Christians being Ottoman subjects. I beg the House to record these the first assemblage of results obtained in this controversy.

I will not detain the House with the particulars of the long, intricate, and wearisome negotiations; but I will pass at once to the critical and decisive point. After much that was unsatisfactory in the conduct of Turkey as well as of Russia, before the close of the year 1853, a change took place in the posture of affairs. Under the presiding influence of Lord Stratford a plan was adopted at Constantinople, which obtained the preference over another plan, simultaneously framed at Vienna, and became the actual basis of the proposal formally made to the Emperor of Russia. By that proposal the Four Powers agreed to a full and perfect concession of all that Russia had any right to demand. It stipulated that the evacuation of the Principalities was to take place as rapidly as possible; that the ancient treaties dissolved at the moment by war, including the treaties of Kainardji and Adrianople, were to be renewed; and the third term was, that the Sultan of Turkey should communicate not to Russia alone, but to each of the Five Great Powers, the firman which it was to issue, and which was to guarantee to the Greek Christians of Turkey all the privileges enjoyed by other non-Mussulman subjects of the Porte. I am quite sure there are many who must listen to this statement with surprise; I am certain it comes upon many as a revelation when they hear stated, what never-

theless is unquestionable, that these, and these only, were the matters then disputed, and that with these concessions the Governments of France, England, and Turkey, would at that time have been well contented. So far we have floated down the stream, such has been the rapid train of events, so remote is our position at this moment from what it then was, that now, under the circumstances of an European war, we even forget what were the points in which we were at that time interested; there seems to be a change in the scale and measure of our judgment, and we are too ready, I think, to adopt ideas wholly novel and dangerous, with regard to the settlement of this question. Well, these were the terms proposed in the end of the year 1853. I might, I am quite sure, appeal to Her Majesty's Government, who are in possession of the knowledge which at that time I shared with them, to bear me out when I state that these terms, so professed before Europe, so published to the world, might, if it were prudent to carry still further the disclosures of the Government to Parliament, receive the most important and conclusive confirmation from documents which passed between the Powers engaged in this great struggle and between their agents. I might support by the most weighty testimonies the statement I now make, but I will not pause to do so.

Well, Sir, what was the manner in which these proposals were received by Russia? And here, fortunately, it is not necessary to do more than state the heads of what occurred in the shortest manner to the House. The terms I have now read, after transmission from Constantinople, were embodied in a protocol signed at Vienna, and bearing date the 13th of January, 1854. This protocol was met, not by a direct answer on the part of Russia, but by the mission of Count Orloff, who, on his arrival at Vienna, submitted

the counter-demands of the Emperor of Russia. And now, having enabled you to appreciate the demands made by the allied Powers, let us proceed to observe what is not less remarkable—the tone then held, and the terms then required by Russia—and with these in your view you will have another fixed point from which you will be able to judge whether it is true, as some have said, that the objects of this war remain as yet wholly unattained, that you have had no success in your operations, and that if you retire now from the prosecution of the war you retire as a baffled, a humbled, and a degraded nation. These which I am about to state are the terms of Russia submitted on the 2nd of February, 1854, and I think I may say this was the proceeding on the part of Russia upon which the resolution was taken by France and England, and taken under the direct recommendation of Austria and Prussia, to send that summons to the Emperor for the evacuation of the Principalities, which, if unheeded, was to be immediately followed, and which, as it proved, actually was followed, by a declaration of war.

There were, as I have said, three propositions offered to the Emperor of Russia, and these were his demands in reply:—In the first place, it was to be a *condition essentielle et irrévocable* that any negotiation which was to take place on the subject matter then at issue should not be at Vienna, but at a different place, and that it should be conducted, not between the five or six Powers concerned, but between Russia and Turkey alone. And what was the place where it was to be conducted? A choice was given to Turkey; the choice between conducting that negotiation either at St. Petersburg, under the frown of the Emperor, or else conducting it at the headquarters of the Russian army. That was the very first condition, announced, too, as a *condition essentielle et irrévocable.* The second condition was the confirmation

full and entire of the old treaties from Kainardji onwards, including all the stipulations which affected the Principalities and Servia. The third was a definition of the protectorate over the Greek Christians; the fourth was the evacuation of the Principalities; the fifth, the restoration of the *status quo* in the Principalities; and the sixth, that Turkey should make a new set of restrictive arrangements with respect to the reception of refugees and strangers within her territory. These were the absolute demands constituting the ultimatum of Russia before the war. Was there or was there not cause for war in these demands? The old claims which threatened the independence of the Turkish empire were maintained and extended; to them were added other larger and more galling demands, for new and odious restrictions were to be placed upon the free action of the Turkish Government in respect to the reception within the Ottoman empire of those who might be fugitives from other countries. Such was our position before the war, and such were the terms which at that time Russia rigidly demanded; terms pregnant with danger to the security of Europe, for they enlarged the claims and riveted the grasp of Russia upon Turkey, and greatly aggravated the dangers of a position already menacing enough.

I need now only dwell upon what may be called the salient points of after occurrences. When the war broke out, by degrees our objects were considerably enlarged. Under the circumstances of this case, I am perfectly ready to avow my responsibility in what then took place, and to maintain the justice, propriety, and wisdom, of that enlargement; but, I apprehend, I shall be borne out by ordinary observation in saying that a nation does not, as a general rule, when it draws the sword, resolve to enlarge the demands it has made before. Take, for instance, the case of the revolutionary war in 1793. It com-

menced purporting to be on defensive grounds, and Mr. Pitt, after the war was begun, did not declare that, though it had been commenced on defensive grounds, he would then pursue it until the restoration of the Bourbons was secured. On the contrary, the war continued to be pursued on these defensive grounds until the colossal power of Napoleon had given to it a character altogether new, and had involved this country in a struggle for nothing less than its independent existence against a force which threatened to swallow up the whole of European Christendom, and which left you no choice but to put down a power that could exist on no terms compatible with our security. Such is the general rule. But in this case we extended our demands after the outbreak of the war. Accordingly a letter was written by Lord Clarendon on the 22nd of July, in which, instead of continuing to recognise the *status quo*, he used these words—

"Her Majesty's Government have no hesitation in stating the guarantees which, in their opinion, and that of the French Government, are essential to secure the tranquillity of Europe from future disturbances. These guarantees are naturally suggested by the dangers to guard against which they are required. Thus, Russia has taken advantage of the exclusive right which she had acquired, by treaty, to watch over the relations of Wallachia and Moldavia with the suzerain power, to enter those provinces as if they were part of her own territory. Again, the privileged frontier of Russia in the Black Sea has enabled her to establish in those waters a naval power which, in the absence of any counter-balancing force, is a standing menace to the Ottoman empire. The uncontrolled possession by Russia of the principal mouth of the Danube has created obstacles to the navigation of that great river which seriously affect the general commerce of Europe. Finally, the stipulations of the Treaty of Koutchouk-Kainardji relative to the protection of the Christians have become, by a wrongful interpretation, the principal cause of the present struggle. Upon all these points the *status quo ante bellum* must undergo important modifications."

Now, the House will see that in this communication three new heads of demand,

relating to the Principalities, to the attitude of Russia in the Black Sea, and to the Danube, are added to the original question of the Greek Christians, and that the statement I have read substantially opens out into the Four Points which were the bases of the recent negotiations. It was, however, by several progressive steps that they assumed their final form. I need not now trouble the House with quotations upon that subject. I have shown the first stage in which they appear in the diplomatic correspondence; and now how does it appear that we have stood in respect to this important change in the objects of the war? Before the war broke out it was thought wise—and the House generally, I think, appeared disposed to acquiesce in the policy—to content ourselves with endeavouring to limit and restrain within bounds the dangerous rights asserted by Russia. After the war, however, our language was changed, and it became this—"We will not be content with limiting and restraining these rights, but will abolish them altogether. The treaties are gone; we have a right to require that they shall not be renewed, and we will demand those further concessions which seem to be necessary for the permanent peace of Europe." It seems to me that that was a wise proceeding. It rested upon the principle that these treaty-rights or treaty-claims were a cover and a cloak for both fraud and violence, that by abolishing them you got rid of that cover and cloak, and, instead of leaving to Russia the power of working out in the dark, and with the protection of colourable pleas, any schemes of self-aggrandisement at the expense of Turkey, you put her in the same position in which any other strong Power is put with regard to a weaker neighbour—namely, that you give her two alternatives—either on the one hand to discharge the duties of loyal and peaceful neighbourship, or on the other to resort to open violence, but that

there should no longer be a middle system of complex relations, under which hostile aggression might wear the mask of right, and Russia with peace and moderation on her lips might securely pursue the accomplishment of sinister designs. The changes made in our demands were justified, I think, by this important principle.

But, again, it is not our own position only that we must consider; we must take also into view the position of Russia, if we wish to arrive at a sound judgment upon this question. I have shown you the six demands of Russia in February, 1854. What has since been the conduct of that then haughty Power? When the first sketch of the Four Points was sent to Russia, in August of last year, permission was given to Count Buol, on the part of Austria, to refer them to St. Petersburg. Lord Clarendon writes on the 15th of August that he does not object to their transmission to St. Petersburg, upon the clear understanding, first that we were not parties to the proceeding, and, secondly, that an armistice should not take place until preliminaries of peace were signed. How were they received at St. Petersburg in August last?

And here, Sir, I must touch for a moment on a most important, but collateral question. I am not now about to enter into any detailed argument in reference to the expedition to Sebastopol, but I do not shrink from my full share of responsibility in regard to that expedition. I admit the gravity of the question. I hope the time will come for its full discussion, and I am ready to defend the policy of the Government, but in the meantime I would ask of those who say with a certain outward show of reason that that expedition has been rash and ill-considered, and that it has entirely failed—I would call upon them to observe the facts I am now going to lay before them—to note the language of Russia in August, 1854, before the expe-

dition to the Crimea, and to note the acts and language of that same Power in December, 1854, after that expedition. I, holding that military expeditions in time of war are not to be regarded as ends, but as means for the attainment of ends, am ready to defend the expedition to the Crimea, nay, more, I am ready to defend it, not upon the grounds of antecedent reason only, but I do not hesitate to say, even by its results.

On the 26th of August, 1854, the Russian reply was received to the communication of Count Buol, and what was that reply? It was a reply which I will not quote *in extenso*, but the effect of it was that the Four Points were terms to which Russia could not consent except at the end of a desperate struggle and a long series of defeats. That was the language of Russia in August, 1854. You will say that these are proofs of her temerity, her arrogance, and her aggressive spirit; and I agree with the reproof; in my opinion, it is impossible to censure too severely the tone and policy of that Court in the year 1854; but it is the marked change in that policy, and the adoption of a different language and a different spirit—it is the disposition which she has more recently shown to meet you, if you will not fly from her advances and refuse to meet her—these are the facts which I want to verify; and depend upon it if we do not verify them now, and adopt the conclusions which ought to arise out of their verification, we may yet have to do so hereafter, under circumstances, too, probably, of a far less favourable nature. Well, Sir, the answer of Russia in the month of August, 1854, to the four proposals, was an answer of prompt, decided, and even haughty rejection. In December, 1854, only four months after that answer, and nothing in the meantime having intervened, that I am aware of, that could act on the mind of the Emperor of Russia except the expe-

dition to the Crimea, the battle of Alma, the battle of Inkerman, and the general circumstances of that memorable campaign—in December, 1854, the Emperor promised an unreserved acceptance of those very terms which in the preceding August he had somewhat contemptuously and contumeliously rejected. It was upon the 7th of January that the Russian plenipotentiary announced to the three Ministers of the allied Courts at Vienna that he was authorised to declare that the Emperor of Russia had unreservedly accepted the four bases of negotiation in the terms laid down by the British and French Governments. That is the state of the facts so far; and although I have drawn largely upon the patience of hon. Members, I hope they will see that I have endeavoured to lay these facts before them in such a way as that they may assist our discussions, for it is impossible to overrate the gravity and solemnity of the question that they raise.

And now, Sir, I think it only remains for me to consider the one main point with respect to the terms asked by us, and refused by Russia, because I am proceeding upon the assumption that, as we are a Power engaged in solemn negotiations, we are bound—whatever the feelings of some among us may be—to treat the negotiation seriously, and to regard the question simply as a question of terms. So viewing it then, how do we stand? You have got your first point, you have got your second point, you expect and believe that, whenever you choose, you may get your fourth point, and you have got the first moiety of the third point; but you are quarrelling about the last moiety. What is it, then, that forms the subject of our quarrel? We are quarrelling because the Western Powers, in conjunction with and supported by Austria—and I have not the least wish to weaken the force and value of that support—have proposed to Russia that she shall come under an European engagement

to limit the number of her ships in the Black Sea. Now that proposal is no part of the essence of the third point—let that be borne clearly in mind. The third point lays down a principle, but it leaves entirely open the mode of its application, and even states broadly a reason why the mode of application could not but be left open. The principle which it lays down is that the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea shall cease. It requires that in some manner a relation shall be established between the naval force of Russia in the Black Sea and other naval forces, which shall be such as not only to diminish, but to destroy, Russian preponderance. The mode of applying the principle, however, is perfectly open, and, therefore, I understated my own case when I said that you were quarrelling for half of the third point—in fact, you are not doing so, but in reality upon the mode of construing one portion of the third point. Now let us look closely at the two modes of construing that moiety of the third point; for that is the most grave and serious question upon which, reduced apparently within such narrow dimensions, nothing less depends than the effusion wholesale of blood and treasure, and the happiness or misery of multitudes of men.

Russia has given to us a certain proposal, I mean her second, not her first; she speaks in substance as follows:—"Let the law of Europe, with regard to closing the Black Sea, remain as it is in all respects but one; and let that one be that Turkey, instead of having no discretion whatever with reference to the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, shall be perfect mistress in the case, and shall have absolute discretion to open them or close them precisely as she chooses from time to time, according to her own estimate of what her safety upon any occasion may require." That is the Russian proposal—a proposal capable, of course, of discussion and im-

provement; a proposal which Austria says we ought not to have rejected, but to have discussed with a view to a settlement. What is the other? It is that the Russian fleet shall be cut down to four sail of the line in the Black Sea; that the Turkish fleet shall be limited to four sail of the line inside the Black Sea, but that Turkey may have outside as many as she chooses; that the other Powers shall be at liberty to have two sail of the line each within the limits of the Black Sea; and, in fact, that there shall be established something like an ostensible or pretended equality of force, although, I fear, that it might prove to be nothing more than pretended. Now, I begin by making a preliminary statement. I think that it is obviously desirable to establish an arrangement with respect to the naval power in the Black Sea, and I do not shrink from my share of responsibility in the language of Lord Clarendon, which I quoted just now, when he said that, in his opinion, the military and naval establishments of Russia, in the absence of any counterbalancing force, must be looked upon as a standing menace to Turkey. But, upon the other hand—for though gusts of passion may sometimes find their way here, yet I well know that an appeal can always be made with safety to the calm and dispassionate reflection of the House—upon the other hand, I think that we must all perceive that this question of the Black Sea is one of great and, in fact, of insurmountable difficulty. It is not, I think, in the wit of man—at least, I have heard of no suggestion which has proceeded from the wit of man, and which furnishes a perfectly satisfactory arrangement with respect to the Black Sea. If the Black Sea were a perfectly open sea, like the Mediterranean, you would know what to do. If it were a perfectly close water, like the American lakes, then, also, you would know what to do. You need have had no difficulty if you had been deal-

ing with Powers that shared the possession of the coasts of this sea had it been entirely shut in, and not accessible to vessels of great draught of water; but, unless we could, by some miracle of engineering skill, contrive to convert the straits of the Black Sea into a mere canal, which can be navigated by small vessels only, we cannot completely dispose of the political difficulty upon that side; and, upon the other side, I fully grant that to treat the Black Sea as an open sea, in consequence of its accessibility to vessels of all draughts, would be equally dangerous, because of the situation of Constantinople upon the shores of the Straits, because of the weakness of the Turkish Government, and its inability to maintain its position by its own resources, and because of the importance to Europe of preventing aggressions upon the Ottoman Empire. That is, I hope, a fair statement of the case, and it is manifestly one surrounded with difficulties. You may adopt one suggestion or another, but I do not think that any suggestion can be made which is not open to a very great deal of objection, and with respect to which you will not be compelled to admit that it affords but an imperfect remedy for the past, imperfect justice as between the parties, and an imperfect security or guarantee for the future.

Thus, Sir, we have to take our choice between several plans, all of which are imperfect. Sir, so far as Parliament is aware, my right hon. Friends near me, together with myself, left office pledged to nothing except to the principle of destroying Russian preponderance; but, for my part—and I am sure that in this point I speak the sentiments of my right hon. Friends who sit near me—I do not for a moment shrink from avowing the fact that our responsibility proceeds beyond the strict letter of the papers which have been presented to Parliament, and that, whether right or wrong, we are responsible, in conjunction with my

noble Friend at the head of the Government and our other colleagues under the Earl of Aberdeen, for having proposed to Russia a limitation of her fleet in the Black Sea. Now, Sir, if I am asked what I think of that plan, I shall say, that I always thought it a defective plan, but that I became a party to proposing it because I was aware of no other. In becoming parties to the proposal of that plan, however, I apprehend that we did not preclude ourselves from profiting by experience, and by the discussions into which we were about to enter, and that it was perfectly free to us in common with our colleagues, had we continued in the Government, either to persevere in that plan of limitation, or to adopt any other plan which in the course of the negotiations we might think equally good, or preferable, for accomplishing the end we had in view, and bringing about a satisfactory peace. Now, what has been the reception of the plan of limitation in this House upon the very first night on which it has been discussed? I am bound to say that I think the Government will feel that its reception here has been most unfavourable. I have heard several Gentlemen rise in this House to defend the war. My hon. and chivalrous Friend the Member for Dorsetshire (Mr. Ker Seymer) I am sure is ready to go all lengths in this sense, and others have spoken in terms similar to his; but it is a most extraordinary fact, that I have not yet heard one Member of the House say, "I am determined to continue the war if the limitation is refused; I am prepared to make peace if the limitation is granted." I may be wrong, but I do not believe that in this crowded House there are twenty Gentlemen who are ready to hold that language. There are many who think that you ought to ask a great deal more than a limitation, or a closing or opening of the Straits, or anything else of the sort, but that is not the question raised in the con-

ferences—that is not the ground upon which you stand before Europe in the responsible position of carrying on a war. The ground upon which you stand, that is, upon which your Government and your negotiator have placed you, before Europe is this; that you are ready to make every concession which ought to be made, and to refuse everything which ought not to be accepted, and that the dividing line ought, in your judgment, to be between limitation of the Russian fleet to a certain number of vessels on the one hand, and the discretional power of opening the Straits upon the other. If the House of Commons gives a vote in the sense of the right hon. Member for Portsmouth, and adopts the Motion which he proposes, I say that that, unless in so far as it may be qualified by the rejection of the Amendment of the Member for Kidderminster, is the legitimate Parliamentary sense of the vote, because when we vote upon papers before us, which have been presented to us by the Crown, we cannot escape the responsibility of the knowledge which those papers convey to us. If the Government had chosen to keep those papers in their own possession, our hands might have been free, and we might have retained our private convictions; but we have now become cognisant of the fact that conferences were held, that they were pursued to a certain point, that no insuperable difficulty arose except one, that that one was limitation upon the one hand, and the discretional power of Turkey over the Straits upon the other—that upon that point, and that point alone, the conferences are in danger of becoming a total failure, and that that is the issue upon which, for this great juncture, everything depends.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire has recorded upon this subject declarations which, in my judgment, are most important; and, if I refer to them, it is with no invidious mo-

tive, but because I think that they are as historical facts worthy to be recorded, that they will be heard of in future discussions, and that, considering that he may well be presumed to speak for others besides himself—they may probably exercise a sensible influence hereafter upon the course of affairs. What was the language of the right hon. Gentleman with regard to the doctrine of limitation? It was that of unmeasured condemnation. He found fault with my noble Friend for having recognised the honour of Russia as something which it was well to keep in view, if not as a primary, still as a secondary consideration; and then he said that, after thus recognising the honour of Russia—which was a superfluous, and indeed spurious, act of benevolence—"you proceeded to propose to her terms that were nothing less than most outrageous;" and he then went on in language varied and diversified, but no less strong, to say that these were terms which the noble Lord ought to have known "it was impossible for Russia to accede to." The chastisement of the right hon. Gentleman is certainly severe—I think he denounced the plan of limitation in terms which are too strong, but I own I feel myself in some degree justly reproved. The more I have considered the plan of limitation, the more I feel the enormous difficulties of carrying it into anything like real or full effect, the more I despair of the ends at which limitation aims being gained by forcing it upon Russia, and the more I feel the extreme indignity which, if so forced, it inflicts upon her; and there is no policy, I think, which is so false and dangerous as to inflict upon Russia indignity without taking away strength.

Let us suppose for argument's sake that we had obtained limitation, although at this time appearances here and elsewhere are such as to make it very questionable whether it will be attained; but if it were, what, what good or what evil, should we

have accomplished? We should, in the first place, have recorded against the Russian Government, in the face of the Russian people, a standing insult to that Government—a standing deprivation of its own natural powers of defence—the first and most essential powers which belong to a Government as such. Sir, I must confess I feel that it is impossible for us to insist upon treating the Black Sea as if it were a lake. Suppose France had a quarrel with Russia, suppose England had a quarrel with Russia, and the Baltic were frozen, so that we could not carry on operations in that quarter, do you think we should not find our way through the Straits into the Black Sea, in order to get at Odessa and destroy it, or for any other purpose of injury which we thought fit? [An Opposition MEMBER: "Why, have we not done so already?"] I really want a reply to this question. How am I to answer the Russian when he says to me, "Turkey, by your own confession, is weak; she has not sufficient power to close the Straits without foreign assistance; and how, therefore, is it to be supposed, if it suits your purpose at any time, or you think you have a legitimate cause of quarrel with, and you obtain admission into the Black Sea—as you would by force or otherwise—that Russia is to consent to meet you there under a treaty stipulation only to keep up four ships of the line? It may be said that war would dissolve this stipulation; but would war create for us upon the instant twenty ships of the line?" Although I should have rejoiced if, therefore, acceptances of limitation by Russia had given us peace, I must own it is a proposition which I scruple to enforce at the point of the sword.

Nor has any satisfactory answer been made at the conferences to the argument of the Russian Plenipotentiaries, who showed that in one and the same breath they were required to guarantee the integrity of

Turkey, and to limit to four ships of the line the means of affording her naval aid. Russia, however, has made known to us another arrangement; and perhaps it may be asked, why did you not yourselves propose that other arrangement to Russia? Speaking for myself, I can give a frank answer to that question — because that other arrangement is one so entirely in favour of Turkey, it so manifestly relaxes the law of Europe in her favour, giving her a control practically absolute over the Straits, and allowing her a perfect command of them for any purpose relating to her security, that I think any Power which had proposed that arrangement to Russia would have been liable to be met by unanswerable objections to it, founded upon its patent and singular inequality. But I own that those objections lose very much of their force the moment that plan is adopted and proposed by Russia herself. If Russia chooses to propose that plan as the best mode of settling the differences which exist, then arise these two questions —first of all, is there, or is there not, any reason to believe that the Russian plan may be upon the whole even a better basis than the plan proposed in opposition to it? and, secondly, if it is not the better but the worse basis, is there such a difference between it and our plan as to justify us in the position which we may soon hold in the eyes of Europe—that of a Power which has broken off negotiations for peace because the principle of limitation was refused to us, and nothing but the principle of a discretionary power over the Straits, vested in Turkey, proposed in its stead? I can have no hesitation as to the answer to be made to those questions, and if I understand aright the language of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, he can have as little. He has denounced this principle of limitation in the strongest terms, as the ground of the very difficulties which all must see in the liabilities it

offers to evasion, in its effectiveness, and in the derogatory character which an independent Power is perhaps justified in attaching to it. Again, I hope the House will bear this in mind, that the Russian agents have in these conferences pointed out, and this with no small appearance of fairness, that the plan of limitation, if Russia had only aggressive objects in view, would fall in better with those aggressive objects than the discretionary powers which she would confer on Turkey. At page 88 of these papers, I find that M. de Titoff remarked that "this double object," (namely, putting an end to the maritime preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea, and strengthening the independence and power of Turkey) "seemed to him better secured by the Russian project, than by the principle of limitation maintained by the opposite party; so that Russia, if she had the ambitious plans which are imputed to her would even have reason to prefer a certain limitation resulting practically" (perhaps it ought rather to be rendered, resulting independently of express stipulation), "from the state of things, to a combination which opens the Black Sea to foreign fleets as soon as the Sublime Porte should consider herself menaced." This is a sentiment well deserving of consideration upon its own merits, and with regard to which, without being able to give a positive opinion on it, I am disposed to think —though in some degree modifying a former opinion in that respect—that there is, at least, very much to be said in its behalf.

That then, Sir, is the state of the question with regard to the negotiations—that is the state of the question, if it be a question of terms at all. But is it a question of terms? I certainly have seen words imputed to my noble Friend at the head of the Government, according to which, if they had been rigorously interpreted, it is not a question of terms at all, and that, I believe, is the sentiment of

some Gentlemen in this House who think that these negotiations have been wrong from the first, and who are too glad to find an opportunity of escape from them. But I maintain that, whatever individuals may think, it is a question of terms for England; and that if this House were to give a vote which by implication would declare that it is not a question of terms, then, after what has taken place at Vienna, it would go far to involve the country in a breach of faith before the eyes of Europe. Again, suppose it is not a question of terms; what are you to do? This is a most grave and serious question. This is the first time that the House of Commons has been called upon to express a solemn judgment upon the rights of the great cause of peace or war, and therefore I say it is of the most vital importance that you should consider what course you are to adopt if you decide that this is not a question of particular terms. In that case you must devise a policy afresh. Are you to resort to the extreme designs which have been recommended in one quarter or another? Are you to think of dismembering Russia? The first objection to that is, that it is impossible. I would only add one word to the strong language used by the right hon. Gentleman opposite on this point. Not only do I think that the hair of the youngest Member among us would become grey before the termination of such an undertaking, but I believe that the consequences of such a scheme would recoil on those who framed it, and that it would be more likely to end in the discomfiture and ruin of the empires concerned in the prosecution of it, than in that of the empire against which it was directed, for human extravagance has ever a tendency to generate violent reaction. Will you have recourse, then, to a war of nationalities? Is that to be the policy to be adopted? The first observation to be made upon that scheme is, that if you intend to make a

war of nationalities it will be well for you to consider whether you will not have to make that war alone. I apprehend that Austria is not very likely to enter with you into a war of nationalities. That proposition, at least, is one which requires very little argument to sustain it. Neither the internal composition of the Austrian Empire nor its external relations render it in the slightest degree probable that she will embark in any such struggle. Then, is France likely to enter into such a war? I may be wrong, but I contend with respect to France as confidently as with respect to Austria, that she will not—that in her present position she cannot—enter into a war of nationalities. And if any man in this House entertains an opposite opinion, I ask him how that war of nationalities is to operate within the precincts of the city of Rome? Can you have any war of nationalities which shall not embrace Italy? Can France, I will not say, but would France, enter into that war of nationalities? Sir, I will not attempt at this moment to enter upon the questions connected with the present state of Italy, and especially with the present condition of the States of the Church, but I must confess I view the present condition of those States with the deepest grief and shame. I will, however, say this, the condition of that country offers a pretty plain proof that you build your expectations upon sand and not upon a rock if you conceive that France is likely to engage with you in a war of nationalities. A war of dismemberment, then, you cannot entertain—the war of nationalities you must pursue, if you pursue it at all, entirely alone. Therefore, you will not pursue it at all. What, after this, remains? It is not a question of terms, we are told by some. Recollect, Russia has completely altered her tone; she has given up everything which twelve months ago she refused; she was then totally and grossly

wrong; with great sagacity and with great wisdom, of course, I shall assume from no motives of enthusiastic generosity or self-sacrifice, but from the sound application of the principles of common sense, and in this case, I hope, also of our common Christianity, she has surrendered all her dangerous and inadmissible claims. ["No, no!" from several Members.] I cannot contend with opposition of that kind; I am physically incapable of doing so; but I beg it to be understood that I mean she has abandoned the untenable claims which she at first put forward, and this, after the facts I have stated and the quotations I have made, is a proposition not to be denied. From the whole of these pretensions she has now receded, and she has thus at least gone far towards putting herself in the right.

So much then, Sir, as to the terms of negotiation between this country and Russia. To me, I confess, it appears that if we now continue the war, the objects for which we so continue it are upon our own showing inadequate, and must therefore fail to justify our proceeding in such a course. But then I hear one Gentleman say that if we stay our hand we shall lose our *prestige;* and another, that Russia is only playing a game of brag, and that if she has conceded so much under the pressure we have already applied, she will under further pressure make further concessions; and another, that war is after all only a trial of strength; and others, in language alike untrue and unwarrantable, that it is necessary we should keep Europe involved in the present war with a view to the security of British power in India. Sir, I confess I have a mode of looking at these questions which is altogether different. I believe that, in war, as well as in peace, the greatest matter is that you should be just; and I frankly own that I shudder and tremble when I hear Gentlemen of humanity and of high principle and character say that

more blood must be shed—more human souls must be dismissed from the light of day—more desolation must be carried throughout Christian families and Christian lands in order to satisfy the demands of military fame. But, Sir, do those demands, even if admitted to be paramount, exact so cruel a sacrifice? Is it really true that England stands in the face of the world at this moment as a degraded nation? I ask you in what war it has ever happened that the successes of your troops were so uniform and so brilliant? It seems never to have mattered in what they were put to the proof, whether it was in the nightly sortie or in the casual skirmish —whether it was in scaling heights that were defended—or in defending heights that were attacked—or whether it was in rushing, under an unhappy error of command, upon clear and inevitable death—in every case the gallant and indomitable spirit displayed has been the same—in every case they not only have proved that they are worthy of the race to which they belong, but have shown that never before did the flame of martial valour burn among our gallant soldiers either brighter or more pure than now. I do not deny that in certain respects there has been matter for regret. I do not deny that ideas have gone abroad on the continent of Europe—a portion of which may have had foundation—that some of the civil departments connected with the army are in a most defective state—that we have gone into the war less provided and prepared than other nations that had more than ourselves made the arts and means of war their study during peace, and that, consequently, many important and essential services have been less efficiently performed than they should and might have been. But if there has been truth in these ideas there also has been greater and more prevailing falsehood. They have mainly had the exaggerated representations made in this country

and in this House as their foundation. What were we told, Sir, in the month of February? I referred before to the words which were then employed by different speakers. One hon. Gentleman said that your army had perished; another said that your army was destroyed; and—the ample vocabulary not being yet exhausted—a third proclaimed that your army was annihilated. These statements, incessantly made, repeated through the newspapers, obtaining credit by force of iteration, and carrying likewise the semblance of authority from being uttered within the walls of this House, were of course believed abroad; and the discredit which has fallen upon England on the Continent, as far as it exists, is at this moment little else than the echo and the reflected image of our own exaggerations. Just to show practically the channel in which these things run, I may mention that I have lately read with great interest the debates that occurred in the Sardinian Chamber upon the question of the subsidy—or rather the loan, I am happy to say, and not the subsidy—from England. In the course of these debates great objection was taken by a considerable section of the members of the Sardinian Chamber to entering into a treaty with this country; and one ground of the objection actually was that England was in so wretched a condition in respect to its military affairs that the Sardinian troops could not be safely trusted in our company, for it was stated (so ran the report of the discussion) in all the English journals, that even the nominal force of the British army was reduced to 12,000 men, and that only 2,000 out of that number were really effective. How, then, can you wonder at such discredit falling upon this country elsewhere when it has grown out of these statements, which we all remember perfectly well to have heard made in this House? But whatever we may think or say of discredit such as this, do not let us

avenge it upon human kind; do not let us wipe it out in blood; let us rather seek to dispel the falsehood by sending abroad what is more true. These misrepresentations are but as insects that live for a day and then disappear; truer notions already prevail. In the month of January I ventured myself to make a statement in this House founded upon returns relating to the force of the Crimean army, which even at that dark era was over 28,000 men. I did not speak of it as though it were an army in the full health and spirits of its first embarkation from England, but as the actual amount of force not being in hospital and being in the discharge of military duties. And as I said just now that I did not believe that there were more than twenty Members in this House, if so many, who would attach much value to the questions raised between the limitation of the Russian fleet, and the modified opening of the Straits, in connection with the continuance of the war; so I much doubt whether more than twenty hon. Members, if so many, credited at the time the statement which I made about the force of the army. But that subject came in its due course before the Select Committee, and no doubt in respect to it stands recorded in the evidence; it rested upon detailed and indisputable figures, and this misapprehension ranks along with all the others which have rapidly disappeared. In truth, as regards military glory, this I, at least, venture to say, that there is no example—go to what period of history you will—in which your army has more nobly performed its duty, or has given more convincing testimony to all those who have been cognisant of the facts, that it is as ready as ever, and also as able as ever, either to defend your shores or to carry your flag wherever honour can be won. But, if I am still to be told that we are to prolong this war for glory, let me put to you one test in respect to this doctrine, because,

after all, this is the real difficulty that we are contending with. It is not the argument in this case that is the difficulty, neither is it the difference between the various plans that are proposed for a specific solution. It is the appeal to feeling, to passion, and to pride. It is, that we cannot now afford to make peace—we must first have a success. The original questions in controversy have been banished out of sight, or, at least, they are now so remote as to be no more than specks in the distance; all the terms that we demanded have, since the war began, been substantially conceded, unless we are to stand upon the at best trivial and paltry difference between the plan of limitation and the plan of a discretion reposed in Turkey to open the Straits when she may think herself menaced. It is no longer a matter of terms; this is the language which we have seen held openly in the public journals, and which I was sorry to find held openly to-night by my hon. Friend the Member for Dorsetshire, that it has become simply a question of the necessity for a military success. I grant that my hon. Friend did not appear to embrace this idea simply; he rather put it in this shape, that we must obtain a success in order that we may secure better terms; but that is not the public and popular sentiment; the popular feeling is, that as to terms there is no great matter at issue, but that what you want is more military success. Now, I venture to say with deep respect, and without imputing any motives to hon. Gentlemen who allow such a sentiment to find place within their breasts, that, if they will put down passion and look at that sentiment with the calm eye of reason, they will see that it is not only indefensible—it is hideous, it is anti-Christian, it is immoral, it is inhuman; and you have no right to make war simply for what you call success. If, when you have obtained the objects of the war, you con-

tinue it in order to obtain military glory—observe the broad distinction that subsists between the objects of the war and success in your military operations—if you persist in the war for the sake of mere military glory, I say you tempt the justice of Him in whose hands the fates of armies are as absolutely lodged as the fate of the infant slumbering in its cradle; you tempt Him to launch upon you His wrath; and if this be courage, I, for one, have no courage to enter upon such a course. I believe it to be alike guilty and unwise; but let me without more delay bring it to the test. I ask, are there any Governments in or out of Europe that would be—I will not say courageous enough, but rash enough, to issue a manifesto framed on this principle—that "whereas we, the Governments of France and England, in the year 1853, proposed to Russia certain terms of accommodation, and whereas upon the breaking out of war we extended those terms and included in them everything that we thought necessary and useful to guarantee the future peace of Europe; and whereas those terms have now been substantially conceded, but the issue of a military operation undertaken in the Crimea still remains doubtful, and it is necessary for us that we should have more military glory before we will accept the terms which we have believed and have solemnly declared to be sufficient; therefore, be it known to all men that we will continue the war until we have obtained what we may think sufficient for us of military glory." The moral sense of mankind would not permit the promulgation by authority of such a doctrine; and yet we suffer the idea that we must not avow to lurk within us, and suffer ourselves to be governed by it.

My noble Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Lord J. Russell) has been censured for the doctrine he laid down at the conferences with respect to the honour of Russia; but it appears to me that he

deserves credit rather than blame for his declaration. Had my noble Friend said that the honour of Russia was to be your primary object, or that of anybody except the Russian negotiators, I grant he would have been open to censure; but he said, on the contrary, that the security of Europe was to be the primary and paramount object, and that, subject to that consideration, the terms most in conformity with the honour of Russia would be the best terms of arrangement. I heartily approve and subscribe to that doctrine; but, depend upon it, whether you approve it or not, from that doctrine you cannot escape. My noble Friend spoke those memorable words, as the organ of England, before assembled Europe; they were regarded as declaring the principle of your proceedings in negotiating for peace; and by those words, and by their legitimate consequences, you will have ultimately to abide. And now, Sir, I will venture to quote one authority which always commands respect in this House, on the subject of the necessity of a success. Do not let it be forgotten that I distinguish most broadly between the necessity of success in military operations and the obtaining those objects for which you entered upon the war. Military operations are not the objects of war; they are its means and instruments. Now, I have been fortunate enough to see a letter of the Duke of Wellington, in which he expresses pretty intelligibly his opinion on the doctrine of the necessity of success in war after its objects are attained. I will not quote names or dates; but the letter had reference to the commander of a military expedition of which the objects had been gained, but who contemplated further operations because he thought it necessary for the honour of his country that he should have a success. The Duke of Wellington used these emphatic words:—

"The idea of the general is that of the newspapers of his country, and that is what I appre-

hend in all these concerns. Complete success in the attainment of the object will not satisfy that people. Somebody must be humiliated. I cannot bear to be a party to such transactions."

Such were the sentiments of the Duke of Wellington: and I yet hope there are among us many who with him will say that they cannot bear to be parties to such transactions.

Now, Sir, I have said it appeared to me that you were in danger not only of placing yourselves in the position of being wrong after you had been right, but of forfeiting the high and special character in which you commenced this war. I think I am justified in asserting that we did not commence this war as mere antagonists of Russia, and, as in ordinary cases, upon a footing of equality with our foe. It was not merely a case in which upon the one side stood a single Power, and on the other side two Powers; it was not a mere combination of numbers against a single empire. The combination represented a principle. It represented that which I may almost call a sort of European law which has prevailed, and has been variously administered, sometimes with advantage, often with great credit and advantage, since the peace of 1815; under which the great Powers of Europe, or some among them, have regulated many minor and local differences, and have frequently preserved the general peace from serious dangers. We entered into this quarrel in combination with France, with Prussia, and with Austria; and I will venture to say that two years ago there was very little difference in the political position of France, of Great Britain, of Austria, and of Prussia, with respect to the question at issue between Turkey and Russia. By degrees France and Great Britain got in advance; Austria—I do not speak in the way of censure or complaint, for her position was peculiar—lagged somewhat behind; Prussia lagged yet more; but it is

important, and it has now become also curious, to remember that so lately as in the spring of 1854 Prussia distinctly contemplated the contingency of aggressive operations against Russia, and on behalf of Turkey. I want to bring it back to the mind of the House how completely this was, not an arbitrary combination, but a representation of the great European combination of Powers, acting against Russia, to vindicate and enforce against her the public law of Europe. It was the summons of France and England to Russia that immediately led to war. That summons was sent in, it is true, only by France and England, but it was sent upon the recommendation of Austria, and was expressly supported at St. Petersburg both by Austria and Prussia. In a protocol agreed upon at Vienna on the 9th of April, 1854, that support is distinctly recorded. In a short time afterwards, a treaty was contracted between Austria and Prussia, which provided for a mutual offensive and defensive alliance in the event—first, of the incorporation of the Principalities with Russia; and, secondly, of an attack on, or the passage of the Balkan by Russia. The passage of the Balkan now seems a visionary event, its possibility is so remote. Then it was far otherwise, it was a near and pressing danger; and you had a treaty between Austria and Prussia providing for their taking part in the offensive proceedings against Russia in the event of the passage of the Balkan. The consequence of this was, that on the 22nd of July, 1854, Lord Clarendon, when writing to Lord Westmorland a despatch which, I think, was probably intended to find its way to the eyes of the Russian Government, felt himself justly entitled to hold this lofty language:—"The opinion of Europe has been pronounced in favour of the course pursued by England and France, and it is needless that they should defend themselves

against the accusations of Russia." Now, Sir, I am afraid, that if we withdraw from negotiation, if we continue war upon grounds in which no other Power except France alone participates, we shall find that the moral authority of our position is greatly weakened and undermined. Besides moral authority, we have to consider material aid. There are some Gentlemen who think we have derived no benefit whatever from Austria in this struggle, but to them I must say, that I am not at all prepared to see with satisfaction the expectant attitude which Austria has hitherto, and, as I think, not dishonourably maintained, with her hand upon the hilt of her sword, with above 300,000 men ranged along her Russian and Polish frontiers and in the Principalities, exchanged for a state of things in which Austria, being dissociated from our objects and purposes, and Russia having made the concessions which Austria thinks vital and necessary, she would become by degrees a mere neutral, and even something less than a merely neutral Power, and would be gradually estranged from the movements of England and France. I apprehend there is not the least doubt that while these 300,000 Austrian troops have been thus placed, something like an equal number of Russians have been detained in a corresponding attitude in their own country; and I think it an event not to be contemplated with any satisfaction that that large proportion of the military force of Russia should be liberated from the present manner of their employment to engage in operations against France and England in the Crimea. But great as will be the material loss which in this way we may suffer, far greater, in my judgment, will be the moral disadvantage if we shall unhappily find that we have lost our title to be the assertors of the public justice of Europe, have descended to a level with our antagonists, and have become involved in an isolated war.

But, then, have the objects of the war been obtained? To those who say they have not, I venture to reply by a challenge. I ask them to show me a case in modern European history in which the political objects of a war have been so completely gained, and in so short a time, without the entire military prostration of the adverse party. You may find cases in which wars have been short and sharp. We may, for instance, take the cases of Spain at the commencement of the revolutionary war, and Prussia in its course, and we may find numerous cases in which, by the complete victory of one Power, and the certain prostration of its antagonist, the objects of a war have been gained with great rapidity. In the present instance, I think I have shown that those objects have been gained, although it has been without the military prostration of Russia. You have gained immense advantages against Russia; but those advantages and your victories—brilliant as they have been, yet have not placed her in such a state of military prostration as to cover her with disgrace; nor do I think that even now you will venture to assume, if you cast the die, that success will be the certain issue of your perseverance. But, I ask, if you attain that success, will you be nearer to your object? Suppose the Russians attempt another Inkerman; suppose in that attempt they fail, as they failed before; suppose 10,000 more Russian troops are laid low by the side of their departed companions; or suppose any still more signal event should occur, do you believe, do you feel entitled to be certain, that the Russian Government either would or could offer you better terms? I may be wrong, but my conscientious belief is that such events might in all likelihood immensely increase their difficulties. It is quite evident that there is no country in which the action of the Government is more dependent upon what may be called national

feeling—and such national feeling is ever strongest when it is allied with religious zeal —than Russia. Now, do you seriously believe that we can intimidate and drive Russia into peace upon any terms we may choose to dictate by killing 10,000, or 20,000, or 30,000 more of her troops, or by taking Sebastopol? Do you think a nation whose enthusiasm was not only not extinguished, but was raised to the highest pitch by the flames of Moscow, when 1,000,000 of men, under, perhaps, the greatest general of modern times, occupied their country, are to be driven into shameful or disastrous terms of peace by mere military successes —be they what they may—gained in the remotest corner of their territory? I confess it seems to me that the present state of things has been providentially adapted to the attainment of peace. If you were to suffer a disaster—which, God forbid—you would find your difficulties increased in making reasonable terms. The spirit of the people would rise against you, and your difficulties would be increased. If, on the other hand, Russia were to suffer such disasters, it is no strained supposition to imagine that the difficulties of her Government might, in like manner, be augmented, and that that which you maintain to be a necessary condition of peace would, if attained, place you infinitely further from the attainment of your object. Now, Sir, for one, I feel with the greatest force the pressure of all those moral considerations which are involved in the unnecessary continuance of the war. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester, on an occasion which is, doubtless, fresh in the memory of this House, when, like my right hon. Friends near me, I sat on the Treasury bench, made a solemn appeal to us with a force of which no man could be insensible, and with an earnestness which did him the highest honour, and charged us with the guilt of shedding blood in an unnecessary war. I did not wince under

that charge, for, whether right or wrong in my conviction, I believed that that war was not unnecessary; that it was one of the class of wars which are carried on at a distance in order that we may not have to wage them nearer home. We made war in the Black Sea, at the extremity of Europe, in order that we might not have to make it in the heart of Europe—as the most celebrated orator of Greece, or perhaps of any country, urged upon the Athenian people that they should make war in Thessaly in order that they might not have to carry it on in Attica. But when I see that Russia has conceded the substance of what was asked—that we are breaking up that association of Powers which gave us at once dignity, security, and strength—when I see the scales of justice so tremulously balanced as though they even verged towards placing those in the wrong who had been in the right, and, perhaps, likewise those in the right who had been grossly in the wrong, I feel deeply the responsibility which I should incur if I did not beseech the House to pause in the course that is opened before them. We have seen with our own eyes, but a few days ago, and with the deepest interest, some of the fainter traces of the desolation of war written upon the forms of those heroic men who received from the hands of majesty itself not the reward, indeed, but yet the acknowledgment of their glorious deeds. We rejoice to see that many of those noble forms were again erect, and that they had regained the elastic step of health and youth. But what shall we say of the thousands of our countrymen who sleep beside the waters of the Bosphorus and under the rocks of Balaklava? What are we to say of our gallant allies, side by side, with whom we have been fighting these battles, and whose losses there is every reason to believe have been fearfully severe?

If, for our own share, we have been

deprived of the precious lives of from 12,000 to 15,000 of our countrymen—if, of the brave sons of France double that number, or more than double, have fallen by war and by the diseases in its train—if we reckon the havoc made among the poor Turks, again we rise in the fearful scale, for of them a far greater multitude have sunk, little heeded, into their homely graves. I saw, not long ago, in the public prints, a detailed account, which had all the indications of correctness, and, according to which, the loss of life in the Turkish army since the war broke out had been 120,000. [A Voice: The Russians.] No, Sir, that was the work of war among the Turks. Nor is there for me any consolation whatever in the yet more dismal tale which has been told us, that against the 50,000 French and English, and the 120,000 Turks, not fewer than 250,000 Russians have been numbered among the dead. The terrible sum total must by this date have come near to half a million; so that by the havoc of this war, for the time that it has lasted, the lives of almost 1,000 of our fellow-men have been extinguished daily. If, indeed, we are making war for a just and sufficient cause, for a cause that will bear examination in our hearts and in our consciences, in the face of man and before the eye of God, we must bear the hard necessity, nor need we shrink even from the terrible slaughter it involves; but if this be not so, if, from whatever cause, you allow this war to be prolonged for no object at all, or for secondary and petty objects, or for any purposes, however brilliant they may seem, which we dare not avow in a solemn public declaration or make known through the Government, the organ of the country, and dare scarcely avow even in the freedom of conversation with our fellow-men, let us, while there is time, do all that in us lies, by taking an initial step, towards putting an end to the desolation of this awful scourge;

let us, by the adoption of terms so just and plain, so moderate and circumspect as those which are proposed to us by my hon. Friend, do what for the moment depends upon us towards giving back to Christendom the hope, at least, of happiness and repose.

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